

(19)



JAPANESE PATENT OFFICE

PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN

(11) Publication number: 06237789 A
(43) Date of publication of application: 30.08.1994

(51) Int. Cl C12P 41/00
//(C12P 41/00, C12R 1:01)

(21) Application number: 05037275
(22) Date of filing: 03.02.1993

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(54) PRODUCTION OF OPTICALLY ACTIVE
ALPHA-HYDROXYCARBOXYLIC ACID
HAVING PHENYL GROUP

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(57) Abstract:

PURPOSE: To produce an optically active α -hydroxycarboxylic acid having a phenyl group by treating a specific α -hydroxynitrile with the genus Gordona microorganism asymmetrically hydrolyzing the nitrile group or its treated product.

CONSTITUTION: An α -hydroxynitrile of formula I (X is H, OH, etc., which may be placed at either of the ortho, meta and para positions; n is an integer of 0-2) is treated with the genus Gordona microorganism asymmetrically hydrolyzing the nitrile or its treated product in a neutral-to-basic aqueous medium to produce the α -hydroxycarboxylic acid superior in the D-isomer or L-isomer. The compound of formula II is similarly produced from the mixture of hydrogen cyanide with an aldehyde corresponding to the nitrile of formula I.

